

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 6410**

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 1090

**NOTE PREPARED:** Dec 23, 2012

**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** County Coroners.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Rep. Bacon

**BILL STATUS:** As Introduced

**FIRST SPONSOR:**

**FUNDS AFFECTED:** X GENERAL  
X DEDICATED  
FEDERAL

**IMPACT:** State & Local

**Summary of Legislation:** This bill requires that all deaths that occur in a county must be reported to the county coroner. The bill requires the Coroners Training Board to prescribe a form to assist a county coroner in determining whether to investigate a death reported to the coroner.

The bill also provides that a coroner is not required to follow certain organ and tissue procurement procedures if the coroner determines that the procurement will impede or interfere with a death investigation.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2013.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** The bill would require the Coroners Training Board to develop a form that would assist a county coroner in determining whether to investigate a medical death. Resources to develop and distribute the form should be available within the existing level of appropriations available to the Board. (Currently, the Coroners Training Board is housed within the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJ), which handles the Board's necessary administrative tasks, charging back expenses to the Board.)

**Background Information:** The Coroner's Training Board is funded through the dedicated, nonreverting Coroners Training and Continuing Education Fund. Currently, if a local health department makes a charge for a certificate of death, a \$1.75 Coroners Continuing Education Fee must be added to the established rate. (After July 1, 2013, the fee increases to \$2.00.) The fund received total revenue of \$691,437 in FY 2011, \$592,891 in FY 2012, and had received \$125,912 as of December 19, 2012.

### **Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:** The bill requires that all deaths are to be reported to the coroner. The bill would further allow the coroner to determine which deaths should be investigated and provides for the development of a form to assist coroners in making this determination. The form would have to be developed by the Coroner's Training Board.

According to the Coroner's Training Board web site, approximately 12% of all deaths are reported to coroners. This provision may increase staffing hours due to increased administrative and investigation time. The cost is currently indeterminate as it would be on a county-by-county basis and would depend on the information determined to be necessary on the form developed by the Board. While the Coroners Training Board staff reported that this provision would have a significant fiscal impact on the county coroners offices, the cost would depend on the specific information to be included on the form developed by the Board, the extent to which staffing hours might be increased in each county in order to address the increased calls, and the extent to which each county coroner would investigate additional cases.

**Background Information:** Current law requires the coroner to be notified when a person has died from violence; has died by casualty; has died when apparently in good health; has died in an apparently suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner; or has been found dead. Coroners also are involved in the natural deaths of persons who do not have a physician to sign a death certificate, deaths of inmates while incarcerated, and deaths of persons who died of a disease that might constitute a public health threat. Coroners also review deaths of people who are to be cremated, buried at sea, transported out of state, or otherwise unavailable for pathological examination. Deaths not reported to the coroner are considered medical deaths (i.e., the deceased individual, due either to age or medical status, was expected to die, and a primary physician signs off on the cause of death). For medical deaths the primary physician usually has personal knowledge of the deceased, knows their medical history, and has access to the medical records to assist in the determination of the cause of death.

### **Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** Coroners Training Board, ICJ.

**Local Agencies Affected:** Coroner's Offices.

**Information Sources:** Auditor's Data, Revenue Trial Balance as of December 19, 2012; *Indiana Handbook of Taxes, Revenues, and Appropriations*, Indiana Legislative Services Agency, FY 2012.

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